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March 1996

Central Nevada Communication Sites Proposed Plan Amendment and Environmental Assessment

EA No - NV-030-96035

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BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
Carson City District Office
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United States
Department of the Interior

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
Carson City District Office
1535 Hot Springs Road
Carson City, Nevada 89706-0638
702 885-6100

IN REPLY REFER TO:
1610 (NV-03337)

APR 2 1996

Dear Reader;

Last year, we invited you and other interested citizens to help us develop a plan for management of communication sites in central Nevada. The comments we received from organizations and individuals helped us prepare the proposed amendment and alternatives in this document. My thanks to those of you who gave us your comments and suggestions. I hope that you will continue to help us manage your public lands.

The final decision on the amendment will be based on public comments and the analysis in this environmental assessment. We are providing a 45-day period for you to prepare your comments on the proposed amendment and finding of no significant impact. Please send them to this office by May 17, 1996. The address is:

Bureau of Land Management
Carson City District
1535 Hot Springs Road
Carson City, NV 89706

You are also invited to stop by one of our open house meetings on the amendment. They will be held on April 29 at the BLM office, 1535 Hot Springs Road, Carson City; on April 30 at the High School Library, Highway 305, North, Austin; and on May 1 at the Churchill County Multi-Purpose Room, 225 Sheckler Rd., Fallon. You are invited to visit with BLM staff anytime during the open house hours of 4 to 7 PM., and give us your comments in writing on a comment sheet provided at the meeting or in person to a public stenographer who will be available throughout the meeting. You are also welcome to visit the BLM offices in Carson City or Battle Mountain Monday through Friday 7:30 to 4:15 on or before May 17, 1996. Calling ahead is recommended. The Carson City District phone number is 702-885-6100 and the Battle Mountain District number is 702-635-4000.

Sincerely,

James M. Phillips
Lahontan Area Manager

CENTRAL NEVADA COMMUNICATION SITE PROPOSED PLAN AMENDMENT AND ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

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INTRODUCTION

PURPOSE AND NEED

The purpose of this proposed amendment to the Shoshone-Eureka, Lahontan and Walker resource management plans (RMPs) is to identify preferred locations for future communication sites in central Nevada. The amendment is intended to identify areas where sites will and will not be permitted, to identify the types of sites that are appropriate for location on public lands and to identify measures needed to protect public health and safety as related to their use.

The amendment is needed to protect the long term quality of the human environment, including public land ecosystems and the public's health, safety, use and enjoyment of public lands from direct, indirect and cumulative impacts associated with development and operation of communication sites. The amendment is also needed to facilitate site processing by identifying preferred locations. The amendment was initiated at the request of residents of central Nevada and the State of Nevada. State and public concern resulted from changed circumstances involving a rapid increase in demand for communication sites for electronic air combat warfare training in central Nevada by the Fallon Naval Air Station.

An evaluation of the cumulative amount of sites found that 69 Navy electronic warfare sites have been constructed on public lands. More than 200 miles of associated powerlines, roads and fiber-optic cables have also been constructed. Sites of primary concern are threat emitters. These sites simulate enemy surface to air threats. They emit electromagnetic radiation and are directly associated with military combat aircraft training flight locations. Many sites are manned and security patrolled.

The expansion of these sites and the associated low-level military flights into central Nevada are affecting the quality of the human environment, including the quality of life of BLM's neighbors in central Nevada and the public's use and enjoyment of public lands.

LOCATION

The planning area includes 5.2 million acres of public land administered by the Bureau of Land Management in the central Nevada counties of Churchill, Lander, Eureka, Nye and Mineral (Map 1).

PLANNING PROCESS OVERVIEW

The plan amendment process includes the nine basic steps common to all public land planning efforts:

- **Issue Identification**. Planning issues are resource management problems or land use conflicts. They were identified through the public scoping process initiated through a Federal Register notice. Invitations to comment were published in newspapers in central and northern Nevada and public open houses were held in Carson City, Fallon and Austin. The scoping process emphasized military electronic warfare facilities. The planning issues identified for analysis were:

  - Determine which locations will be identified as preferred communication site areas.
  - Determine which areas will be closed to all communication site development.

- Determine which areas will be closed to military electronic warfare threat emitter site development.

- **Planning Criteria Analysis**. This analysis concluded that existing criteria to guide the planning process were appropriate and need not be changed. The criteria include: use existing data to the extent possible; identify opportunities to resolve problems; formulate a range of alternatives from an emphasis on protection of natural values to maximizing human land uses and facilities; document the analysis of alternatives in plain language and discuss minor issues briefly; and select the preferred alternative based on the combination which best meets demands for public lands while minimizing disruption of the human environment.

- **Inventory Data and Information Collection**. Resource data necessary to complete the analysis was compiled. Based on the scoping process this analysis emphasized military electronic warfare facilities.

- **Analysis of the Management Situation**. An analysis of inventory data and resource information was conducted in conjunction with information about communication and electronic warfare site demand, public land uses and concerns. The results of this analysis form the basis of the affected environment description in this document.

- **Alternative Formulation**. Based on the issues, criteria and analyses conducted, four alternatives were developed. The continuation of current management alternative analyzes current management practices. Three other alternatives were developed which address various levels of management to resolve the issues and concerns identified during the planning process.

- **Estimation of Effects**. The analysis of the physical, biological, social and economic effects of implementing each of the alternatives is included in this document.

- **Preferred Alternative/Proposed Plan Amendment Selection.** Based on the analysis of effects, a preferred alternative/proposed plan amendment was selected.

- **Select the Plan**. Based on evaluation of public comments on this proposal, a final plan will be selected and implemented.

- **Monitoring and Evaluation**. Communication and electronic warfare site development under the plan amendment will be periodically monitored and evaluated to determine the effectiveness of the decisions. The objective is to determine whether or not implementation of communication site management is achieving the desired results. Information obtained through the evaluation process will be used to adjust management, including any subsequent amendments if appropriate.

CONFORMANCE WITH PUBLIC LAND USE PLANS

The Lahontan, Walker and Shoshone-Eureka RMPs do not specifically identify preferred sites for communication facilities or address

electronic warfare sites. Applications for communication sites are evaluated on a case-by-case basis, subject to existing laws and standard operating procedures to protect natural and cultural resources. The RMPs provide for management of lands in central Nevada for a variety of multiple uses including outdoor recreation, livestock grazing, wildlife habitat, wild horses, mining and watershed protection. Specific areas were designated for disposal from public ownership and for powerline corridors. If approved, the proposed amendment will become a part of the Lahontan, Walker and Shoshone-Eureka RMPs. All subsequent communication site development will be in conformance with the land use plans as amended.

RELATIONSHIP TO STATUTES, REGULATIONS OR OTHER PLANS

State of Nevada land use policies do not specifically address the location of communication or electronic warfare sites in central Nevada. However, as part of the scoping process for this plan amendment the State's position was:

> ***"State officials have long sought a cumulative review of the U.S. Navy's slow, but deliberate, plan to expand its electronic [warfare] tracking systems in central Nevada. Therefore, we strongly support the BLM's efforts to define locations that are suitable for siting military communication sites in north central Nevada. The plan amendment process is the appropriate way to achieve this end."***

Public lands are managed under the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 (FLPMA). That act emphasizes that the public lands will be managed in a manner that will protect the quality of scenic, ecological, environmental, and archaeological values; preserve and protect certain public lands in their natural condition; provide feed and habitat for wildlife and livestock and will provide for outdoor recreation. The Act also provides for harmonious and coordinated management of the various resources without permanent impairment of the quality of the environment.

FLPMA provides for authorizing public land uses for other federal agencies under cooperative agreements, rights-of-way or withdrawals. A withdrawal is an action that restricts disposition of public lands and holds them for a specific purpose, rather than for multiple use as provided in FLPMA.

In the past, threat emitter sites have been permitted under both rights-of-way and withdrawals. As a result of the analysis for this plan amendment, it has been determined that under FLPMA, withdrawals are the only appropriate authorization for threat emitter sites. That determination was based on the extent and degree/intensity of the effects of threat emitters and the fact that threat emitter sites will be dedicated to military use and closed to other users, because there is a safety hazard, there is a significant investment in facilities, and the military presence will be continuous and long term. Future threat emitter sites will only be authorized through withdrawals and only in areas identified through this planning effort.

The other federal land use plan in the area that specifically addresses communication

site development is the Toiyabe/Humboldt National Forest Plan. That plan identifies three specific locations in central Nevada for communication sites. The proposed amendment is fully consistent with the forest plan.

The Navy currently has short term plans to establish four new threat emitter sites and five new tracking instrument substation (TIS) sites on public lands in the plan amendment area and three new TIS sites on nearby Forest Service Lands (see Appendix). The Navy has prepared a draft environmental assessment addressing site specific impacts of their proposal. That assessment is incorporated by reference (U.S. Navy, 1995a). Processing of applications for these sites is currently on hold pending the outcome of this plan amendment process.

In addition to the above proposal, the Navy identified the long term establishment of another 19 TIS and 25 threat emitter sites (see Appendix) spread throughout central Nevada in the Special Nevada Report to Congress on cumulative environmental impacts from military activities statewide (U.S. Air Force, et. al., 1991). Environmental analysis of cumulative effects from that report is incorporated by reference. The Navy indicates that there are no current proposals to establish these sites.

This plan amendment environmental assessment is tiered to the Lahontan, Walker and Shoshone-Eureka RMP Environmental Impact Statements.

The plan amendment has been prepared in compliance with BLM Manual 1620. The manual provides guidance on planning for communication facilities. It provides for a process to designate preferred locations and for exclusion areas.

PROPOSED AMENDMENT AND ALTERNATIVES

INTRODUCTION

The proposed amendment, two action alternatives and a continuation of present management alternative have been developed for this analysis. These represent a reasonable range of management opportunities for new communication and electronic warfare facilities on public lands in central Nevada. Table One summarizes land management categories by acreage for each alternative.

Several plan amendment determinations are common to all action alternatives. These are:

- Management decisions apply to all communication and electronic warfare sites and associated facilities, regardless of the type of authorization. This includes rights-of-way, withdrawals and cooperative agreements.

- Facilitate communication site processing and minimize surface disturbance by grouping future communication facilities at locations where existing facilities occur, access is reasonably available, terrain is appropriate for communication facility needs, and other resource values are limited. These preferred locations are Fairview Peak, New Pass, Mt. Moses, the north end of the Fish Creek Mts. and Mt. Lewis (Map 1). Communication site applicants would be encouraged to locate in these areas. With proper justification, and excluding threat emitters, new sites would be considered in other non-prohibited areas.

- Facilitate continued Navy electronic warfare site development by permitting additional communication sites, including threat emitters, in the currently heavily used Dixie/Fairview valleys/Bell Flat/Middlegate area (Map 1).

- Protect important natural, recreation, wilderness, wildlife, watershed, visual and Native American values by prohibiting future communication and electronic warfare sites of all types in the most sensitive areas. These include portions of the Clan Alpine, Desatoya, Stillwater, Gabbs Valley and Simpson Park Mountain ranges, Bald Mountain and the Sand Mountain and Hickison Petroglyph recreation areas (Map 1).

- Ensure that public health and safety on public lands are protected by including the following stipulation on all new and existing communication and electronic warfare sites: "No harmful levels of electromagnetic radiation from communication facilities will be permitted on open public lands."

In response to concerns raised as a result of this plan amendment process, the Navy has agreed to drop radar avoidance chaff only over lands owned or withdrawn by the Navy.

Regardless of the alternative selected, current standard operating procedures for environmental analysis will be followed. Each proposal for an individual communication site or threat emitter will be further analyzed in a project-specific environmental analysis.

PROPOSED AMENDMENT

The objective of the proposed amendment is to facilitate future communication site application processing, to fully protect the health, safety and quality of life of central Nevada residents and public land visitors, and to protect public land ecosystems by identifying preferred locations for communication facilities and eliminating inappropriate uses. The proposed amendment (Map 2) consists of the following elements in addition to those listed above:

- Prohibit new threat emitter sites outside of the currently heavily used Dixie Valley area. New threat emitters outside of this area would be incompatible with FLPMA's requirement to manage public land resources in a harmonious and coordinated manner without permanent impairment of the quality of the environment. These sites and their associated military air combat training exercises are incompatible with the health, safety and quality of life of central Nevada residents and the public's use and enjoyment of public lands. These sites are manned by military personnel; require extensive infrastructure developments such as fiber optic cables, powerlines and roads; are dedicated to military use and closed to other users because there is a safety hazard, there is a significant investment in facilitates or the military presence will be continuous and long term; and/or there is a direct relationship between the sites and military combat aircraft overflights, such as terrain masking maneuvers.

  The Fairview Peak preferred location would continue to be available for threat emitters. The New Pass, Mt. Moses, north Fish Creek Mts. and Mt. Lewis preferred locations would not be available for threat emitters.

ALTERNATIVE A

The objective of Alternative A is to provide for further expansion of electronic warfare facilities while emphasizing the protection of the health, safety and quality of life of central Nevada residents and visitors to public lands and emphasizing the protection of public land ecosystems (Map 3). It consists of the following elements in addition to those listed for all action alternatives:

- No new threat emitters would be permitted outside of the currently heavily used Dixie Valley area within five miles of areas with high recreation, solitude, wildlife, visual or watershed values in the Clan Alpine, Desatoya, Stillwater, Gabbs Valley and Simpson Park Mountain ranges, Bald Mountain and the Sand Mountain and Hickison Petroglyph recreation areas, private lands, the Pony Express trail and major highways.

ALTERNATIVE B

The objective of Alternative B is to maximize potential expansion of electronic warfare facilities while providing for protection of the health, safety and quality of life of central Nevada residents and visitors to public lands and protection of public land ecosystems (Map 4). It consists of the following elements in addition to those listed for all action alternatives:

- No new threat emitters would be permitted outside of the currently heavily used Dixie Valley area within one mile of areas with high recreation, solitude, wildlife, visual and watershed values in the Clan Alpine, Desatoya, Stillwater, Gabbs Valley and Simpson Park Mountain ranges, Bald Mountain and the Sand Mountain and Hickison Petroglyph recreation areas, private lands, the Pony Express trail and major highways.

CONTINUATION OF CURRENT MANAGEMENT ALTERNATIVE

The continuation of current management alternative would continue the present practice of authorizing all types of communication sites and supporting infrastructure (Map 5). Since the current land use plans do not specifically identify site locations, this includes processing all applications on a case-by-case basis throughout the planning area with the exception of the Wilderness Study Areas (Table 1). Standard operating procedures and laws to protect various resources would continue to be followed as outlined in the Lahontan, Walker and Shoshone-Eureka RMPs.

Table One
Land Management Prescriptions by Alternative

Land Management Category	Proposed Amendment	Alternative A	Alternative B	Continuation of Present Management
Preferred Communication Site Locations (acres (# sites))	4,000 (5)	4,000 (5)	4,000 (5)	0 (0)
Lands Closed to all future Communication Sites and Threat Emitters (acres)	640,000	640,000	640,000	625,000*
Lands Closed to future Threat Emitters Only (acres)	4,030,000	3,953,000	1,567,000	0
Lands Potentially Available for all types of Communication Sites and Threat Emitters (acres)	538,000	615,000	3,001,000	4,587,000

* This includes wilderness study areas. These areas are closed to future communication sites pending a decision on their wilderness designation by Congress.

Map 1

Central Nevada Communication Site Plan Amendment Area

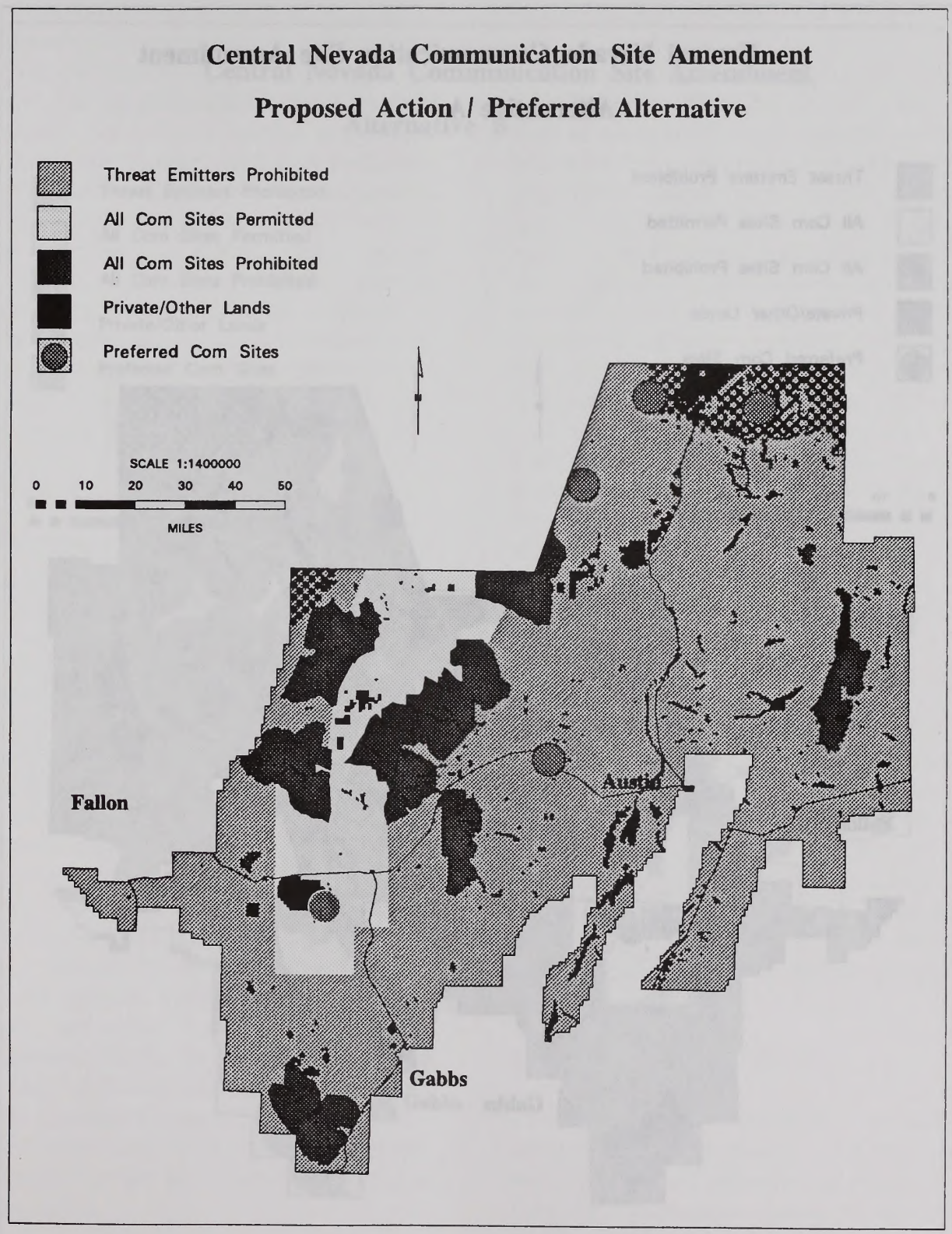
Battle Mountain
Buffalo Valley
Fish Creek Mts.
Mt. Moses
Mt. Lewis
Crescent Valley
Bald Mtn.
Augusta Mts.
Antelope Valley
Carico Lake Valley
Shoshone Mts.
Stillwater Mts.
Dixie Valley
Alpine Mts.
Clan Alpine Mts.
Edwards Creek Valley
New Pass
Lander County
Reese River Valley
Toiyabe Range
Mt. Callaghan
Simpson Park Mts.
Eureka County
Grass Valley
Fallon
Job Peak
Louderback Range
Sand Mountain
Middlegate
Desatoya Mts.
Smith Creek Valley
Austin
Hickison Site
Spencers Hot Springs
Kingston Canyon
Smoky Valley
Toiyabe National Forest
Fairview Valley
Bell Flat
Sand Springs Range
Fairview Peak
Churchill County
Mineral County
Nye County
Walker River Indian Reservation
Yomba Indian Reservation
Gabbs Valley
Gabbs
Gabbs Valley Range

Native American Reservations
Public Lands
Military Lands
Private Lands
Wilderness Study Areas
Pony Express Trail
Major Roads

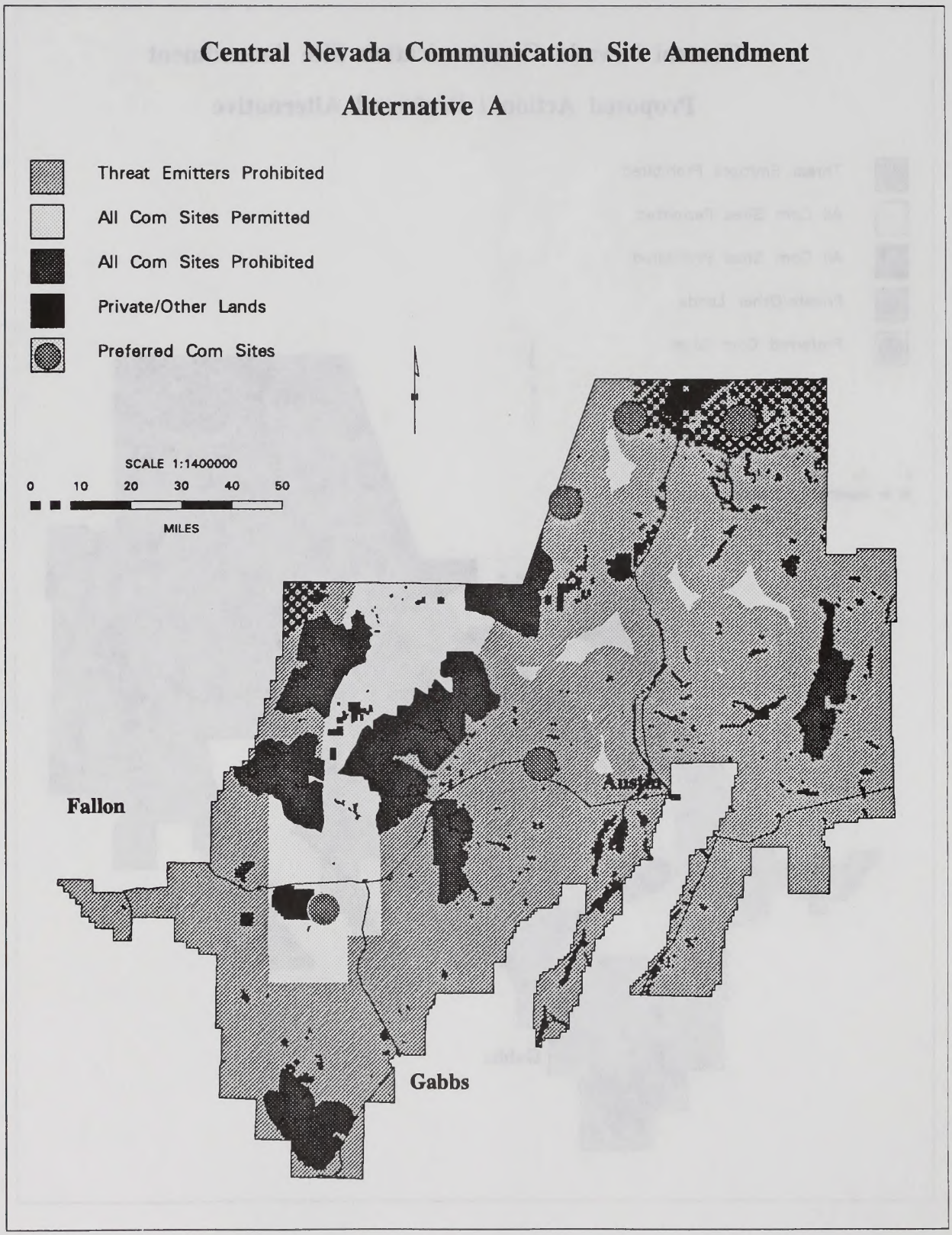
N

10 0 10 20 30 Miles

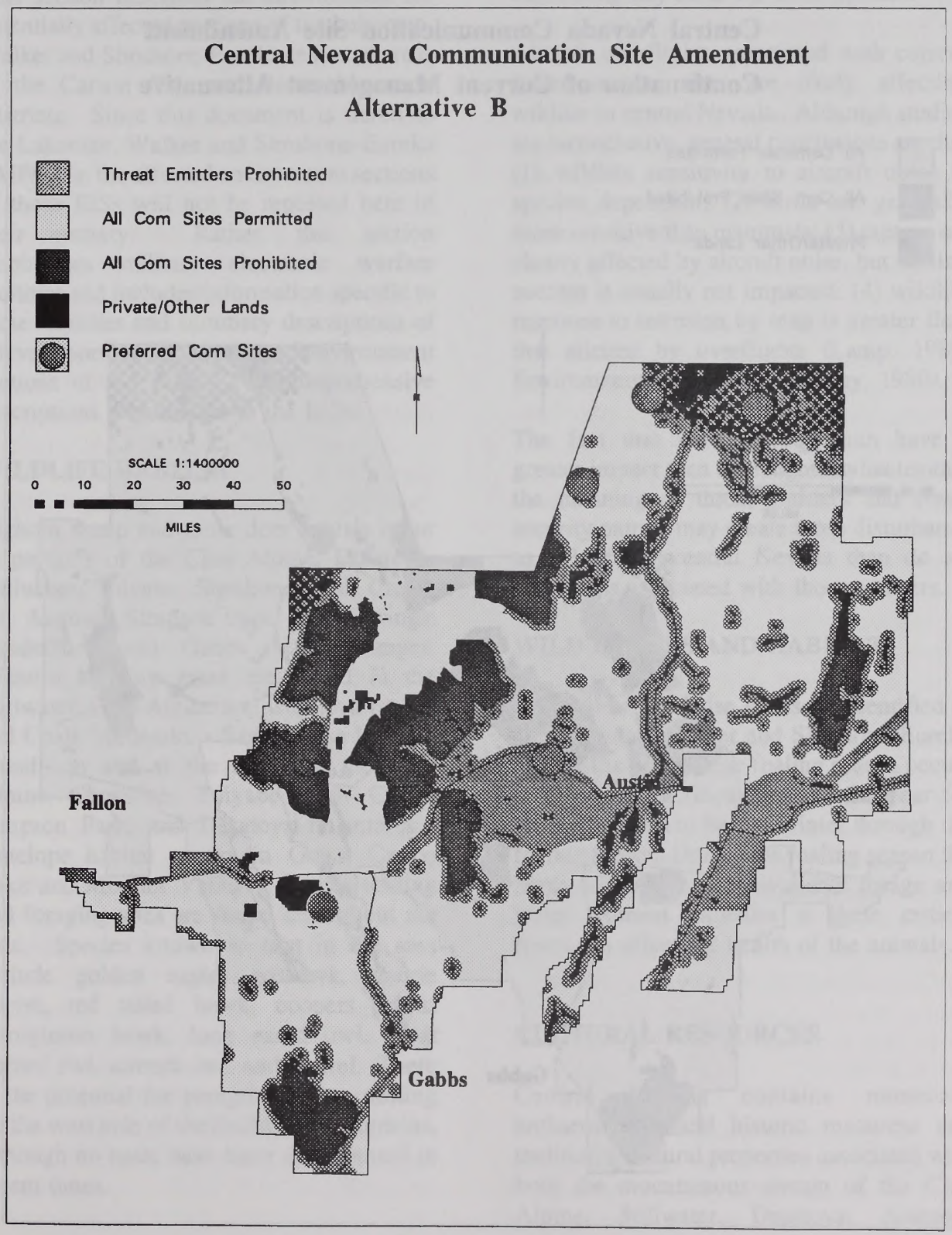
Map 2


Central Nevada Communication Site Amendment
Proposed Action / Preferred Alternative
Threat Emitters Prohibited
All Com Sites Permitted
All Com Sites Prohibited
Private/Other Lands
Preferred Com Sites
SCALE 1:1400000
0 10 20 30 40 50
MILES
Fallon
Austin
Gabbs

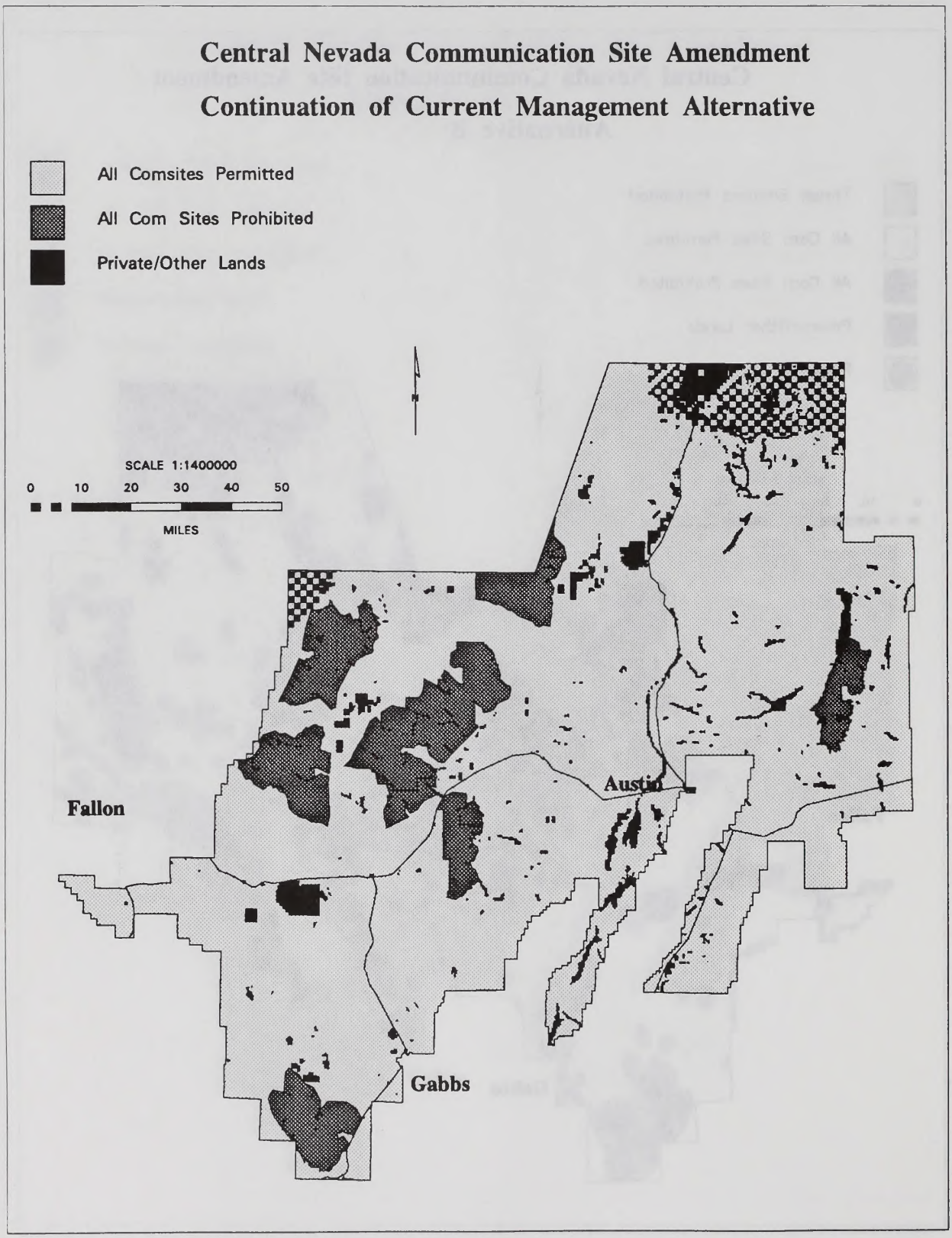
Map 3


Central Nevada Communication Site Amendment
Alternative A
Threat Emitters Prohibited
All Com Sites Permitted
All Com Sites Prohibited
Private/Other Lands
Preferred Com Sites
SCALE 1:1400000
0 10 20 30 40 50
MILES
Fallon
Austin
Gabbs

Map 4


Central Nevada Communication Site Amendment
Alternative B
Threat Emitters Prohibited
All Com Sites Permitted
All Com Sites Prohibited
Private/Other Lands
Preferred Com Sites
SCALE 1:1400000
0 10 20 30 40 50
MILES
Fallon
Austin
Gabbs

Map 5


Central Nevada Communication Site Amendment
Continuation of Current Management Alternative
All Comsites Permitted
All Com Sites Prohibited
Private/Other Lands
SCALE 1:1400000
0 10 20 30 40 50
MILES
Fallon
Austin
Gabbs

AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT

This section describes the environment for potentially affected portions of the Lahontan, Walker and Shoshone-Eureka resource areas of the Carson City and Battle Mountain Districts. Since this document is tiered to the Lahontan, Walker and Shoshone-Eureka RMP/EISs, the affected environment sections of those EISs will not be repeated here in their entirety. Rather, this section emphasizes military electronic warfare facilities and includes information specific to these facilities and summary descriptions of relevant portions of the affected environment sections of the EISs. For comprehensive descriptions please refer to the EISs.

WILDLIFE HABITAT

Bighorn sheep and mule deer habitat occur in portions of the Clan Alpine, Desatoya, Stillwater, Toiyabe, Shoshone, Fish Creek, Mt. Augusta, Simpson Park, Sand Springs, Louderback and Gabbs Valley ranges. Bighorn lambing areas are found in the Stillwater, Clan Alpine and Desatoya ranges and Chalk Mountain. Sage grouse leks are found in and at the edges of the Clan Alpine, Shoshone, Toiyabe, Fish Creek, Simpson Park, and Desatoya mountains. Antelope habitat occurs in Grass, Carico Lake and Monitor Valleys. Raptor nesting and foraging sites are found throughout the area. Species known to nest in the area include golden eagle, goshawk, prairie falcon, red tailed hawk, coopers hawk, ferruginous hawk, long eared owl, great horned owl, screech owl, and kestrel. There is the potential for peregrine falcon nesting on the west side of the Stillwater Mountains, although no nests have been documented in recent times.

Migratory song birds and bats also use the area but there is no good inventory data delineating key areas for these species.

Aircraft overflights associated with current threat emitter sites are likely affecting wildlife in central Nevada. Although studies are inconclusive, general conclusions are that (1) wildlife sensitivity to aircraft noise is species dependent; (2) birds are generally more sensitive than mammals; (3) raptors are clearly affected by aircraft noise, but nesting success is usually not impacted; (4) wildlife response to intrusion by man is greater than that elicited by overflights (Lamp, 1989; Environmental Protection Agency, 1980).

The fact that intrusions by man have a greater impact than overflights indicates that the manning of threat emitters and Navy security patrols may create more disturbance to wildlife in central Nevada than do air operations associated with those emitters.

WILD HORSES AND HABITAT

Wild Horse Herd Use Areas are identified in the Lahontan, Walker and Shoshone-Eureka RMP/EISs. Wild horse foaling season occurs in the spring. Critical time of the year for the herds tends to be late winter through the foaling season. During the foaling season the herds will locate near available forage and water. Human intrusion at these critical times can affect the health of the animals.

CULTURAL RESOURCES

Central Nevada contains numerous archaeological and historic resources and traditional cultural properties associated with both the mountainous terrain of the Clan Alpine, Stillwater, Desatoya, Augusta,

Simpson Park, Gabbs Valley and other mountain ranges and the valley bottoms between the ranges. Archaeological sites in the plan amendment area include large open camp sites found along the margins of the marshes, sloughs and playas that are associated with wetland resource procurement, cave and rock shelter sites found in Pleistocene lake terrace settings and upland camp and quarry sites in mountainous terrain associated with game and lithic procurement.

Historic resources include the route of the Pony Express Trail, as well as numerous other wagon roads and trails associated with the early population of the far west. Sites associated with early mining activity are found throughout the area, including numerous ghost towns that were once busy centers of precious metal speculation and extraction.

Mountain ranges contain resources that figure prominently in Native American spiritual practices and spiritual beliefs. Mountain peaks, such as Job Peak, are often identified as "power spots" and historical places of refuge. There is a high probability that such areas contain sites that may qualify as traditional cultural properties suitable for inclusion on the national register of historic places. Native Americans identified numerous plant, animal and mineral resources within these areas that are still used by tribal members.

SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC CONDITIONS

The planning area includes portions of Churchill, Lander, Eureka, Nye and Mineral Counties in central Nevada. Communities in the area include Austin, Gabbs and Kingston Canyon. The area also includes ranches and homes in Reese River, Smoky, Antelope, Edwards Creek, Gabbs, Grass, Crescent, and other valleys. The economy of the area is based on local government, mining, alfalfa farming, livestock ranching, tourism and retirement income. Communities in the surrounding area include Fallon, Battle Mountain, Hawthorne and Eureka. These communities also rely heavily on mining, farming, ranching, tourism and retirees for their economic bases, but the Fallon and Hawthorne economies are also based on military employment at the Fallon Naval Air Station and the Hawthorne Army Ammunition Depot.

Tourism is associated with the natural character and the remote pristine nature of the region as well as its wildlife and cultural resources. Residents of the area prefer small towns or isolated ranches and homes rather than metropolitan areas. Amenities they find beneficial include the natural quiet of rural areas, lack of human intrusion and free access to remote public lands. Recreational pursuits are usually centered on outdoor activities including camping, hiking, fishing, off road vehicle travel, hunting and hiking. One scoping commenter noted:

> "We who live here, go to Reese River and Smoky Valley to get away from the noise; to enjoy camping, fishing and the quiet."

Military combat training overflights are currently an intrusion on the backcountry, communities, homes and ranches of central Nevada. These overflights disturb the peace and quiet of the area that are so important to its residents and visitors.

Much of central Nevada is located within the area identified, in 1978 by the Indian Claims Commission, as the aboriginal territory of the Western Shoshone. The Yomba Shoshone Reservation, is located within the planning area. The Walker River Paiute Reservation is located adjacent to the planning area as is Crescent Valley, the home of several Western Shoshone individuals. During the scoping process Western Shoshone indicated their opposition to further military expansion because of health concerns, aircraft noise during traditional ceremonies, and the suspected degradation of plant and animal resources caused by the placement of remote equipment and materials emitted during flights. Areas of concern were Reese River Valley, Crescent Valley, Grass Valley and Bald Mountain. Bald Mountain was particularly emphasized. During consultation, the Western Shoshone stated that they abhorred the disruption and noise associated with military operations in these areas.

LAND USE

Land Use Plans

Land use plans in the amendment area provide for management of the lands for a variety of uses compatible with the long term preservation of the human environment under the principles of multiple use and sustained yield. Current plans do not specifically identify the preferred locations or types of sites appropriate for central Nevada. See **CONFORMANCE WITH LAND USE PLANS** and **RELATIONSHIP TO STATUTES, REGULATIONS OR OTHER PLANS** above for a more detailed description.

Electronic warfare sites - Navy

Military airspace operations areas overlie the entire planning area. Existing military air combat training electronic warfare facilities on public lands in central Nevada include 33 threat emitters, 27 tracking instrument substation (TIS) sites, two master TIS sites, three repeater sites, a radar reflector site and three Range Air Surveillance System sites. Threat emitters are located in Dixie Valley, Fairview Valley, Bell Flat, the Sand Springs Range and the area south of Middlegate. They are military air combat training radar emitters which are primarily located in the valley bottoms and on low lying terrain. Their purpose is to simulate enemy military facilities. They are used for air combat training purposes.

They are surrounded by chain link fencing topped with barbed wire to eliminate public access. Each is equipped with warning lights and radiation warning and no trespassing signs. They are typically half an acre in size, but many include as much as five acres depending on the type of electronic warfare equipment and supporting site structures. Many of the threat emitter sites require powerlines to operate. The smaller emitter sites are operated by diesel generator. Hazardous substances on site include diesel above ground storage tanks, waste oil, lubrication oils and cleaning fluids. Each site contains electronic warfare structures and equipment shelters and is linked by a buried cable system which provides for detecting intruders and other uses.

Threat emitters include both manned and unmanned sites. Manned sites are staffed with three to five military personnel during normal working hours. Their presence

deters the public. Outside of working hours, multiple daily security checks are made by security forces (U.S. Navy, 1995a). All weather access has been developed to each site and is required for continual facility operation and maintenance. The Navy is currently proposing four new threat emitters, averaging six acres each.

Threat emitters are directly related to air combat training maneuvers. According to the Navy "the airspace above the EWS [electronic warfare sites] is used for electronic jamming and defensive maneuvers" (U.S. Air Force, et. al., 1991). Examples of missions associated with threat emitters are:

- **Suppression of enemy air defenses.** These missions practice neutralizing enemy air defense systems on the ground (threat emitters simulating radar, surface to air missiles and antiaircraft artillery). Techniques involved may include stand off as well as direct attacks (simulated) on the threat emitter sites. Aircraft would enter the threat emitter arena at various altitudes and simulate an attack on the threat emitters. No ordnance releases are authorized on these missions.

- **Air interdiction strikes.** These involve simulated aircraft strikes directed against simulated enemy military facilities or lines of communication. These missions can involve one or more aircraft flying a low level approach across threat emitter areas and may deliver bombs or other munitions on exiting bombing ranges. Aircrews practice terrain masking and other avoidance maneuvers in conjunction with threat emitter sites.

- **Fighter sweep and escort.** These missions are flown in conjunction with the interdiction missions as part of an integrated strike package. The sweep and escort portions of these missions are generally conducted at medium or high altitudes and flown across threat emitter areas at very high speeds to engage simulated enemy aircraft.

- **Close air support.** These missions involve disabling simulated enemy ground-based threat systems that are in close proximity to friendly ground forces. Flights would generally involve low-level, subsonic speeds and high maneuvering in the vicinity of the threat emitters. Typical targets include tanks, trucks, armored vehicles, surface-to-air missiles and anti-aircraft gun systems. Since delivery accuracy is a major measure of effectiveness on this type of mission, they are generally carried out in the vicinity of impact areas where live or training ordnance can be expended as part of the training exercise. Weapons are not released in the vicinity of threat emitter sites.

- **Jamming and electronic support measures.** These operations are conducted to ensure that the airwaves are available for use by friendly forces and denied to the enemy, usually in support of attacking aircraft. Jamming consists of transmitting electronic signals to overwhelm the electronics of threat systems or confuse them with false signals. Both low-altitude, high-subsonic and high-altitude supersonic flight may be used. Electronic support measures involve search, intercept, identification and location of enemy

electronic emissions. Flights are required in the general vicinity of the threat emitters, but not necessarily directly overhead.

The TIS sites are unmanned self-contained sites 16' x 16' in size and contain a 23' support tower, two 4' diameter parabolic antennas, a solar panel and battery pack. The TIS are electronic tracking devices and communication systems which monitor aircraft training activities, transmit data and communicate between the sites and the Naval Air Station. They do not simulate enemy military facilities.

In general the TIS sites are located on mountain tops and are widely distributed throughout central Nevada. TIS sites in remote locations can be installed by helicopter to reduce surface disturbance. The Navy is currently proposing five new TIS sites on public lands and three on Forest Service land.

Two "master" TIS sites, located on Fairview Peak near Dixie Valley and Mt. Callaghan in the Toiyabe Range, are collection points for the data transmissions. The New Pass repeater is a self-contained site which relays information between the two "master" TIS sites. The Range Air Surveillance System (RASS) sites located in Dixie, Gabbs and Reese River valleys are approximately one acre in size. The RASS sites are comprised of a support tower with large antenna structure, equipment shelter and auxiliary generator. Each site is fenced and secured and is supported by communication cable, access road and a powerline. The RASS sites were constructed to improve radar coverage and safety in areas affected by Navy flight operations by providing traffic controllers with accurate military and civilian aircraft location and status. The other three small self-contained repeater sites or reflector sites in the Fallon Training Range Complex are communication relays which permit NAS Fallon and its support units to coordinate low level flight operations or calibration of electronic warfare equipment.

There are 69 military electronic warfare sites in central Nevada totalling approximately 180 acres. The support facilities including powerlines, access roads and communication cables cover a distance of about 200 miles and occupy approximately 550 acres.

The Navy's current level of development in central Nevada is the most intensive *and* extensive use of public land for electronic warfare in the country. Only one other site, in Florida, has Navy threat emitter sites on publicly owned lands (U.S. Navy, Dec., 1995b). That area, on Forest Service land adjacent to the Pinecastle bombing range in Florida, includes only six threat emitters. According to the Forest Service, the future of this bombing range complex is currently under debate (Thorsen, 1996).

Communication Sites - Other

A number of commercial communication sites are located within the planning area. Major communication sites include Fairview Peak, Mt. Lewis in the Shoshone Range and Mt. Moses in the Fish Creek Mountains which accommodate a number of users including various utility and commercial communication companies and federal, state and local agencies. Power and access has been developed to these sites. There are also numerous self contained microwave repeater sites owned primarily by telephone companies located in the Stillwater

Mountains and Reese River and Grass valleys. Mt. Callaghan also accommodates a small BLM repeater site in addition to a Navy "master" TIS site.

Recreation

Recreation is the most widespread land use in the region. Dispersed recreation occurs throughout the area and consists of backcountry sight-seeing, camping, off highway vehicle use, horseback riding and hiking. Hunting and fishing occurs primarily in the mountain ranges, including the Clan Alpine, Desatoya, Stillwater, Sand Springs, Simpson Park and Gabbs Valley ranges. Heavily used recreation sites include Sand Mountain, the Pony Express trail and Hickison Petroglyph Site. The scoping process also identified Spencer's Hot Springs as a recreation area, although as a result of dangerously high water temperatures, its use is not encouraged. The quality of recreation opportunities is currently reduced by the noise and sonic booms from military overflights and disturbance associated with 69 existing electronic warfare sites as indicated by numerous complaints received during the scoping process.

Ranching

Livestock ranching in this area has been a primary use of the public lands for over 100 years, long before these lands became popular for many of the other uses as occur today. This area has been home and the base operation for both cattle and sheep operations. Ranches vary in size with the largest running approximately 3000 cattle and 4000 sheep. Livestock are generally grazed on mountain pastures during the summer and are wintered on private lands or valley bottoms. Ranchers in the area indicate that currently, low level military overflights and sonic booms have adverse startle impacts to them and their livestock.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

Public health and safety concerns identified during the scoping process are primarily related to military threat emitter sites and focus on noise, radiation, and chaff. Navy threat emitter sites electronically simulate missile and gun firing, but do not actually fire such weapons. These sites emit powerful non-ionizing radiation whose primary effect on humans is to heat body tissue. The American National Standards Institute has developed guidelines for exposure to this radiation based on the biological effects of energy absorptions. The absorption rate depends on both the strength of the beam and its frequency. Thermal effects from overexposure to non-ionizing radiation include increased heart rate, increased permeability of the blood-brain barrier and eye cataract formation. Non-thermal effects of this radiation are less clear, but could include damage to the central nervous and immune systems. Safe distance from radiating equipment ranges from zero to 1538 feet for threat emitters depending on the type of equipment. Five existing threat emitter sites currently pose electromagnetic radiation hazards to the public (U.S. Navy, 1995c).

Chaff consists of microfine silica fibers coated with aluminum. It is used to mask aircraft from radar. In training missions its use is associated with both air-to-air combat training and the ground-to-air threat emitters that have caused concern in central Nevada. Over two trillion chaff fibers have been dropped on central Nevada over the last 20 years (U.S. Air Force, et. al., 1991).

Although the Navy currently has no authority to drop chaff off of Navy land, fibers have been found on public land in Dixie, Fairview and Edwards Creek valleys and the Desert Mountains.

Concerns about the biological effects from the use of chaff include the potential for ingestion of aluminum and silica glass and the inhalation of chaff fibers. Chaff fibers are very brittle and easily broken. Silica dust, consisting of small fragments of silica glass dispersed in the air is considered a nuisance dust and has been identified as a potential human carcinogen by the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health. Public concern has been expressed about the relationship between aluminum and Alzhiemers disease. No direct relationship has been established, but a study of long term exposure to inhalable aluminum has shown a decrease in human cognitive capabilities. In addition, although aluminum occurs naturally in the body, it has been reported to accumulate in brain tissues with age, that aluminum can be transported to the brain via the nasal passageways, and that there may be a positive relation between aluminum concentration in drinking water and regional rates for dementia (Rifat, S.L., 1990).

WILDERNESS

The region includes the Clan Alpine, Job Peak, Stillwater, Desatoya, Augusta, Gabbs Valley Range, and Simpson Park Wilderness Study Areas. These areas have all been identified as having wilderness values. Section 603(c) of FLPMA states that the BLM shall manage lands under wilderness review so as not to impair the suitability of such areas for preservation as wilderness. Portions of the Clan Alpine and Desatoya WSA's were ranked as having the highest wilderness qualities and have been recommended to Congress for designation as wilderness under the National Wilderness Preservation System. A key component of wilderness quality is solitude. Solitude includes the freedom from man-made noises, including military overflights. Currently solitude is affected by military combat training in central Nevada. Solitude is also affected by the presence of military facilities, particularly manned, security patrolled threat emitter sites.

The Interim Management Policy for Lands Under Wilderness Review (IMP) does not allow for facilities such as a communication site within a WSA, unless the non-impairment criteria can be satisfied. This means that the proposed use must be a temporary use that neither creates any surface disturbance nor involves permanent placement of structures. If an area is designated by Congress as a component of the National Wilderness Preservation System, no new communication sites could be authorized within the area.

VISUAL RESOURCES

Public lands in central Nevada are generally in a visually pristine condition with few visual intrusions. These lands are characterized by north-south trending mountain ranges typical of the Great Basin. Mountain ranges, including the Clan Alpine, Desatoya, Stillwater, Gabbs Valley, Augusta and Simpson Park are tree covered and snow capped in winter. Valleys are green with annual grasses and wildflowers in the spring, turning to shades of brown and grey in late summer and autumn. Visual intrusions include 69 Navy electronic warfare sites and over 200 miles of associated roads and

powerlines. Most of this disturbance is found in Dixie and Fairview valleys, Bell Flat and the Middlegate area. Other intrusions include mining disturbances, livestock facilities and commercial utility rights-of-way.

NOISE

Noise is unwanted sound that interferes with normal activities or otherwise diminishes the quality of the environment. There is wide diversity among human responses to noise, which varies not only according to the type and characteristics of the noise source, but also according to the sensitivity and expectations of the receptor, the time of day, background noise levels and the number of occurrences and amount of time the noise occurs. Due to the limited industrial and commercial activities, central Nevada is among the quietest places in the United States. Intrusive noises, including sonic booms, are caused by military combat training overflights, which are currently concentrated in Dixie and Fairview valleys, the Middlegate area and Bell Flat. Other areas are subjected to overflights with less frequency including Edwards Creek, Gabbs, Smith Creek, Reese River and Smoky valleys. The noise from these aircraft is particularly disturbing because it is abrupt and intense.

ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES

This section analyzes the impacts of the proposed and alternative restrictions on communication site location in central Nevada. Based on the public scoping process the analysis is focused on military electronic warfare sites, including threat emitters and tracking sites, and associated airspace use. Only those resources affected as a result of the proposed amendments or alternatives are discussed.

PROPOSED AMENDMENT

Wildlife Habitat

Prohibiting future threat emitter sites on four million acres outside of the Dixie/Fairview Valley/Bell Flat/Middlegate area could reduce future disturbance of wildlife habitat in central Nevada. No future disturbance from these sites would occur, reducing the potential for aircraft noise and surface disturbance and military ground activities such as security patrols and manning of potential new threat emitters.

Identifying preferred locations for communication facilities would concentrate these sites in areas previously disturbed or determined to have limited wildlife habitat values, thus reducing the surface disturbance of these sites in more valuable areas, including undisturbed portions of the Shoshone, Toiyabe and Fish Creek mountains.

Establishing 640,000 acres of communication and electronic warfare site exclusion areas would benefit wildlife habitat in those areas. High value wildlife habitat areas, including the Desatoya, Clan Alpine, Stillwater, Mt. Augusta, Gabbs Valley and Simpson Park mountains would be protected from future habitat disturbance by development and operation of communication site facilities. They would also be protected from increased indirect impacts from military overflights associated with electronic warfare threat emitter sites, although current overflights would continue.

Cumulative impacts to wildlife habitat within the 538,000 acre Dixie/Fairview valleys / Bell Flat/Middlegate area would continue to occur. These would include potential additional surface disturbance in addition to the 700 acres already disturbed by military facilities planning area wide.

Non-threat emitter and commercial communication sites could potentially be located on 4.6 million acres of public land. In these areas, the potential for future disturbance to wildlife habitat would continue, but would be less likely since future communication facilities would be more concentrated in the preferred locations.

Overall, impacts to wildlife habitat would not be significant. Any future facilities in these areas would continue to be subject to standard operating procedures and laws for the protection of wildlife, including sensitive species.

Wild Horses and Habitat

Wild horse herd use areas do not conflict with preferred communication sites on Mt. Lewis, Mt. Moses, North end of the Fish Creek Mountains, Fairview Peak and New Pass Range. Overall, impacts to wild horses and their habitat would not be significant.

Cultural Resources

Prohibiting future threat emitter sites on four million acres would reduce the potential for future disturbance to cultural resources in central Nevada. No future surface disturbance from these sites will occur, reducing the potential for disturbance to cultural resources.

Identifying preferred locations for communication facilities would concentrate these sites in areas determined to have limited cultural resource values, thus reducing the surface disturbance of these sites in more valuable areas.

Establishing 640,000 acres of communication and electronic warfare site exclusion areas would benefit cultural resources and traditional cultural properties in those areas. Potential future disturbance of cultural resources by facilities would be eliminated in portions of the Desatoya, Clan Alpine, Gabbs Valley Range, Stillwater, Mt. Augusta, Bald Mtn. and Simpson Park mountains. They would also be protected from increased indirect impacts from military overflights associated with electronic warfare threat emitter sites.

Cumulative impacts to cultural resources within the 538,000 acre Dixie/Fairview Valley/Bell Flat/Middlegate area could continue to occur. This may include additional surface disturbance in addition to the 700 acres already disturbed by military facilities. Since facilities would continue to be subject to existing standard operating procedures and laws to protect cultural resources, these impacts are not expected to be significant.

Non-threat emitter and commercial communication sites could potentially be located on 4.6 million acres of public land. In these areas, the potential for future disturbance to cultural resources would continue, but would be less likely since future communication facilities would be more concentrated in the preferred locations. Any future facilities in these areas would continue to be subject to standard operating procedures and laws for the protection of cultural resources.

Social and Economic Conditions

Prohibiting future threat emitter sites outside of the Dixie/Fairview Valley/Bell Flat/Middlegate area would reduce the potential for future decreases in the quality of life in central Nevada. No surface disturbance, visual intrusions, security patrols or noise from associated military air operations due to potential future threat emitters would occur. This would reduce the potential for impacts to tourism and quality of life associated with the natural character and remote pristine nature of the region. The potential for future disturbance of the Yomba and Crescent Valley Western Shoshone communities associated with new threat emitter sites would also be eliminated.

Identifying preferred locations for communication facilities would concentrate these sites in areas with limited potential to affect the tourism industry or the quality of life of the region, thus reducing the potential future disturbance of areas with greater potential to affect social and economic conditions.

Establishing communication and electronic warfare site exclusion areas would reduce the potential for harm to the tourism industry

and quality of life of the region by preserving the remote pristine nature of portions of the Desatoya, Clan Alpine, Stillwater, Mt. Augusta and Simpson Park mountains and preserving the recreational character of the Pony Express trail, Sand Mountain and Hickison Petroglyph areas. Excluding sites from the Bald Mountain area would eliminate the potential for additional surface disturbance and visual intrusions disruptive to traditional Western Shoshone activities.

Cumulative impacts to social and economic conditions in the Dixie/Fairview Valley/Bell Flat/Middlegate area would continue to occur. This may include additional surface disturbance in addition to the 700 acres already disturbed by military facilities planning area wide. Since the Navy has already purchased most of the private land in this area, these impacts are not expected to be significant.

A total of 4.6 million acres of public lands would continue to be available for non-threat emitter communication site location, including communication facilities that would serve the tourism industry and current and future residents. In these areas, the potential for future surface disturbances would continue, but would be less likely since future communication facilities would be more concentrated in the preferred locations. Any future facilities in these areas would continue to be subject to standard operating procedures and laws for the protection of visual and other resources related to social economic conditions.

Land use

Land use plans. Prohibiting future threat emitter sites outside the Dixie Valley/Fairview Valley/Bell Flat/ Middlegate areas would enhance management of public lands under the Lahontan, Walker and Shoshone-Eureka RMPs. No surface disturbance, site closures, visual intrusions, security patrols or noise from associated military air combat training operations due to potential future threat emitters would occur. This would reduce the potential for conflicts with the multiple use and sustained yield management identified in the RMPs.

Identifying preferred locations for communication facilities would concentrate these sites in areas with limited potential to affect the long term quality of the human environment of central Nevada, thus reducing the potential for future conflicts with the management of other resources identified in the RMPs.

Establishing communication and electronic warfare site exclusion areas would enhance existing decisions in the RMPs by protecting wilderness qualities, wildlife habitat and watershed conditions in portions of the Desatoya, Clan Alpine, Stillwater, Mt. Augusta and Simpson Park mountains and preserving the recreational character of the Pony Express trail, Sand Mountain and Hickison Petroglyph areas.
Cumulative impacts to the operation of the Lahontan RMP in the Dixie/Fairview Valley/Bell Flat/Middlegate area would continue to occur. Since facilities in this area would continue to be subject to laws and standard operating procedures to protect the human environment, these impacts are not expected to be significant.

A total of 4.6 million acres of public lands would continue to be available for non-threat emitter communication site location. In these areas, the potential for future surface

disturbances would continue, but would be less likely since future communication facilities would be more concentrated in the preferred locations. Any future facilities in these areas would continue to be subject to standard operating procedures and laws for the protection of other resource uses as identified in the RMPs.

Electronic warfare sites - Navy. Prohibiting future threat emitter sites outside the Dixie Valley/Fairview Valley/Bell Flat/ Middlegate areas would eliminate the development of new sites by the placement of electronic warfare facilities and equipment shelters on public lands that are outside of the areas where proliferation of the sites and impacts have already occurred. It would also eliminate the potential future development of new access roads, communication cables, powerlines associated with the threat emitter sites which often result in individual and cumulative impacts far greater than the emitter sites themselves. Existing threat emitter sites could be upgraded or additional sites added by the Navy within the established geographic area previously described above.

The proposed amendment would allow the potential location of military non-threat emitter sites in an extensive area except where sensitive resources such as wilderness study areas are located. The non-threat emitter sites such as tracking sites are small, remote, self-contained units that maintain a relatively low profile, do not require infrastructure, do not generate dangerous radiation levels and do not require fencing to protect the public safety. The military non-threat emitter sites would be evaluated on a case-by-case basis along with the potential impacts.

The Navy has indicated that restricting continued expansion of electronic warfare on public land by prohibiting new threat emitter sites outside of the Dixie Valley/Fairview Valley/Bell Flat/Middlegate areas would disrupt their plans to expand electronic warfare training facilities. However, the Navy would continue to have over half a million acres available for such sites in the Dixie Valley area as well as the existing 33 threat emitter sites on public land.

Communication sites - other. The preferred locations identified in the proposed amendment are sites that have been developed or have potential for development for commercial and governmental purposes. Existing sites are located on mountain tops and have power and access already available and the impacts to the sites are confined to an existing communication site complex. Overall impacts to other public lands outside the preferred location would be reduced by encouraging operators to locate their equipment on existing sites and encouraging co-location of new users in existing building and utilizing existing antenna structures. Identification of the preferred locations was based on the location of existing infrastructure in close proximity to the potential site area and past inquiries for establishment of new sites in the planning area. The concentration of facilities at these sites could increase the electromagnetic corona effect and consequently the area needed as a buffer for public safety.

Recreation. Prohibiting future threat emitter sites on four million acres outside of the Dixie/Fairview Valley/Bell Flat/Middlegate area could reduce potential future impacts to dispersed recreation opportunities in central Nevada. These impacts could include disruption of

recreation activities by military and security forces, associated aircraft noise and surface disturbance related with threat emitters.

Identifying preferred locations for communication facilities would concentrate these sites in areas determined to have limited recreational opportunities, thus reducing the surface disturbance of these sites in more valuable areas.

Establishing 640,000 acres of communication and electronic warfare site exclusion areas would benefit recreational opportunities in those areas. Lands with the highest recreational values, including the Desatoya, Clan Alpine, Stillwater, Mt. Augusta, Gabbs Valley, and Simpson Park mountains, Sand Mountain, and the Hickison Petroglyph site would be protected from future disturbance by facilities. They also would be protected from increased indirect impacts from military overflights associated with electronic warfare threat emitter sites.

Cumulative impacts to recreation opportunities in the 538,000 acres Dixie/Fairview Valley/Bell Flat/Middlegate area would continue to occur - these would include additional surface disturbance in addition to the 700 acres already disturbed by military facilities. Since facilities would continue to be subject to existing standard operating procedures and laws to protect recreation opportunities, these impacts are not expected to be significant.

A total of 4.6 million acres of public lands would continue to be available for non-threat emitter communication site location. In these areas, the potential for future disturbance to recreational opportunities would continue, but would be less likely since future communication facilities would be more concentrated in the preferred locations. Any future facilities in these areas would continue to be subject to standard operating procedures and laws for the protection of recreational values.

Ranching. The proposed amendment would help to stabilize the activity by the Navy in the area. No further increases in the over flights should occur due to an increase in emitter sites. It is believed that there will not be any further impacts to the ranching operations within the area. This is the most palatable to the ranching operations in the area and gives some assurance that their ranching operations will continue as they have.

Health and safety

Prohibiting harmful radiation in areas accessible to the public would eliminate potential harmful radiation related health and safety impacts from both existing and facilities.

Complying with the existing Navy policy of not dropping chaff on non-Navy lands would reduce potential health impacts from its ingestion or inhalation. However potential hazards remain from the existing chaff that has already been dropped. In addition, future chaff drops over Navy lands could drift onto other public or private lands.

Wilderness

Prohibiting future threat emitter sites on four million acres outside of the Dixie/Fairview Valley/Bell Flat/Middlegate area would eliminate potential future impacts from threat emitter establishment to wilderness values in central Nevada. These impacts would include reduced opportunities

for solitude due to aircraft noise associated with threat emitters and visual degradation from the threat emitters facilities.

Identifying preferred locations for communication facilities would concentrate these sites in areas determined to have limited wilderness values, thus reducing the surface disturbance of these sites in more valuable and pristine areas.

Establishing communication and electronic warfare site exclusion areas would benefit wilderness values in those areas. Lands with the highest wilderness values, including the Desatoya, Clan Alpine, Stillwater, Job Peak, Augusta, Gabbs Valley Range and Simpson Park Wilderness Study Areas would be protected from future disturbance by facilities. Solitude opportunities, a key component of wilderness values, also would be protected from increased indirect impacts from military overflights associated with new electronic warfare threat emitter sites in the Desatoya, Gabbs Valley Range and Simpson Park WSAs.

Cumulative interference with solitude opportunities in the Clan Alpine, Stillwater, Job Peak and Augusta WSAs may continue to increase as a result of the proximity of these WSAs to the Dixie Valley area where threat emitters could be permitted. This would be due to the potential increase in noise from threat emitter associated military overflights. Impacts to solitude from military overflights were analyzed in the Lahontan RMP/EIS.

The remaining public lands would continue to be available for non-threat emitter communication site location. In these areas, the potential for future disturbance to wilderness values would continue, but would be less likely since future communication facilities would be more concentrated in the preferred locations. Any future facilities in these areas would continue to be subject to standard operating procedures and laws for the protection of wilderness values.

Visual resources

Prohibiting future threat emitter sites on four million acres outside of the Dixie/Fairview valleys /Bell Flat/Middlegate area would reduce potential future impacts to visual resources from threat emitter establishment in central Nevada. These would include visual impacts resulting from surface disturbance during construction of the site and any attendant access roads, the physical presence of the threat emitter itself, and any ancillary structures required for the site, such as fences, parking areas and overhead powerlines.

Identifying preferred locations for communication facilities would concentrate these sites in areas which already have been impacted by similar activities, thus reducing the visual impacts of such sites in areas where currently they do not exist.

Establishing 640,000 acres of communication and electronic warfare site exclusion areas would benefit the visual resource values in those areas. Lands with the highest visual resource values, including the Desatoya, Clan Alpine, Stillwater, Mt. Augusta, Gabbs Valley, and Simpson Park mountains, Sand Mountain, and the Hickison Petroglyph site would be protected from visual impairment by potential future facilities.

Cumulative impacts to visual resources in the 538,000 acre Dixie/Fairview valleys / Bell Flat/Middlegate area would continue to

occur - these would include additional impairment of the visual resource in addition to the 700 acres already affected. Since future facilities would continue to be subject to existing standard operating procedures and laws to protect visual resources, these impacts are not expected to be significant.

A total of 4.6 million acres of public lands would continue to be available for non-threat emitter communication site location. In these areas, the potential for future visual resource impacts would continue, but would be less likely since future communication facilities would be more concentrated in the preferred locations. Any future facilities in these areas would continue to be subject to standard operating procedures and laws for the protection of visual resources.

Noise

Prohibiting new threat emitter sites on four million acres outside of the Dixie/Fairview valleys / Bell Flat/Middlegate area would eliminate the potential for future aircraft noise impacts associated with new sites. Since the proposed amendment would not affect existing threat emitter sites, noise and sonic booms from air combat training maneuvers overflights would continue and may increase if non-threat emitter air combat activities increase.

ALTERNATIVE A

Wildlife habitat

Prohibiting future threat emitter sites on 3.9 million acres within five miles of sensitive areas outside of the Dixie/Fairview Valley/Bell Flat/Middlegate area could reduce future disturbance of wildlife habitat in central Nevada. This would involve less surface disturbance and disturbance from military ground activities associated with threat emitters, such as security patrols and manning of the sites.

Cumulative impacts to wildlife habitat in the Dixie/Fairview valleys / Bell Flat/Middlegate area would continue to occur. These would include additional surface disturbance in addition to the 700 acres already disturbed by military facilities. A total of 77,000 acres outside of this area would also be potentially available for threat emitter sites. This would include portions of Antelope, Buffalo, Grass and Carico Lake valleys and the Shoshone, Fish Creek, New Pass and Toiyabe mountain ranges. These areas contain important mule deer, sage grouse and antelope habitat. Threat emitters in these areas would result in additional wildlife habitat disturbance from surface disturbance and military ground and air activity. Since aircraft flights associated with threat emitters are not limited to direct overflights of the emitters, this alternative would result in potential future threat emitter associated overflights throughout most of the plan amendment area. Any future facilities in these areas would continue to be subject to standard operating procedures and laws for the protection of sensitive species.

Other wildlife habitat impacts would be the same as those for the proposed amendment.

Wild horses and habitat

This alternative may effect the health of wild horses due to human intrusion in Herd Use Areas. Threat emitter sites could result in additional wild horse habitat disturbance due to military ground and air activity. During critical times of the year (late winter through foaling season) this intrusion could adversely affect the health of the herd. Other impacts would be the same as those for the proposed amendment.

Cultural resources

Prohibiting future threat emitter sites on 3.9 million acres could reduce the potential for future disturbance to cultural resources in central Nevada. No future surface disturbance from these sites would occur, reducing the potential for disturbance to cultural resources.

Cumulative impacts to cultural resources on 538,000 acres in the Dixie/Fairview Valley/Bell Flat/Middlegate area could continue to occur - these would include additional surface disturbance in addition to the 700 acres already disturbed by military facilities. A total of 77,000 acres outside of this area would also be potentially available for threat emitter sites. This would include portions of Antelope, Buffalo, Grass Pine and Carico Lake valleys and the Shoshone, Fish Creek, New Pass and Toiyabe Mountain ranges. Threat emitters in these areas would result in additional cultural resource impacts from surface disturbance. Since facilities would continue to be subject to existing standard operating procedures and laws to protect cultural resources, these impacts are not expected to be significant.

Other cultural resource impacts would be the same as for the proposed amendment.

Social and economic conditions

Prohibiting future threat emitter sites on 3.9 million acres within five miles of sensitive areas outside of the Dixie/Fairview Valley/Bell Flat/Middlegate area would have little effect on social economic conditions in central Nevada. Threat emitters could continue to be located on an additional 77,000 acres scattered across much of the plan amendment area in portions of Antelope, Buffalo, Grass and Carico Lake valleys and the Shoshone, Fish Creek, New Pass and Toiyabe Mountain ranges. Noise from threat emitter related aircraft overflights would continue to affect social and economic conditions in central Nevada.

Other social and economic impacts would be the same as for the proposed amendment.

Land use

Land use plans. Prohibiting future threat emitter sites on 3.9 million acres within five miles of sensitive areas outside of the Dixie/Fairview Valley/Bell Flat/Middlegate area would have little impact on future conflicts with the management of other resources as identified in the existing RMPs. Threat emitters could continue to be located on an additional 77,000 acres scattered across much of the plan amendment area in portions of Antelope, Buffalo, Grass and Carico Lake valleys and the Shoshone, Fish Creek, New Pass and Toiyabe Mountain ranges. Continued surface disturbance, site closures, visual intrusions, security patrols and noise from associated military air combat training operations due to potential future threat emitters would occur and continue to disrupt the management of public lands under the existing RMPs.

Other impacts to land use plans would be the same as for the proposed amendment.

Electronic warfare sites - Navy. Prohibiting threat emitter sites on 3.9 million acres within five miles of sensitive resource areas, private lands/communities and highways would close 75 percent of the public lands in the planning area to threat emitter development. A total of 77,000 acres in non-sensitive areas of Antelope, Buffalo, Grass Pine and Carico Lake valleys and the Shoshone, Fish Creek, New Pass and Toiyabe Mountain ranges would remain open for threat emitter development. Each potential site could occupy five acres which would be fenced for security and public safety purposes, contain various equipment shelters and electronic warfare equipment, and would be manned on a continuous basis. Operation of the electronic warfare systems on the sites, however, would require that infrastructure such as roadways, powerlines and communication cables be constructed to the sites in closed areas, resulting in impacts which are greater than the sites themselves. Construction, operation and maintenance of the sites also requires that frequent vehicle trips be made by military or contract personnel to and from the site.

Although authorizations for military electronic warfare facilities do not specify exclusive use, it is the objective of the Navy to prohibit the public from their electronic warfare sites for security reasons. This, in effect, removes the lands from further consideration for all other uses.

This alternative would limit the placement of new threat emitter sites. The Navy has

indicated that this alternative would reduce their ability to expand their electronic warfare training facilities. However, the Navy would continue to have over half a million acres in the Dixie Valley area as well as another 77,000 acres scattered throughout central Nevada for future threat emitter development.

Communication sites - other. Impacts would be the same as for the proposed amendment.

Recreation. Impacts to recreational opportunities would be similar to those described under the proposed amendment. However, since this alternative would provide for threat emitters on an additional 77,000 acres scattered across much of the plan amendment area in portions of Antelope, Buffalo, Grass and Carico Lake valleys and the Shoshone, Fish Creek, New Pass and Toiyabe Mountain ranges, noise from new threat emitter related aircraft overflights could reduce the quality of recreation opportunities in central Nevada.

Ranching. Further expansion of electronic warfare facilities of this magnitude would lead to further changes to the character of the area. Eventually electronic warfare training would become a dominant use of the area, interfering with traditional uses and other multiple uses of the public lands. This would have detrimental effect to the ranching community and could result in the elimination of ranch homes in this area as it did in Dixie Valley with the Navy buy outs. As Navy operations increase over the area, the results are felt by ranchers who live in the area. Although the actual number of individuals effected by the increase in activity is not great, this impact from overflights to these individuals diminishes their quality of life in this setting. The natural character of the once remote and pristine area is gone, values that the ranching families enjoyed for generations. However, today the same values are enjoyed by many of the public land users who feel strongly about preserving values. Most of the ranchers living in the area have learned to put up with the current activities but most do not want any increase. The noise made from aircraft is very disturbing, coming with no warning, it is abrupt, nerve racking and very intense. Although there are no studies to prove this noise harms livestock, the ranchers claim it does and have several stories to cite as examples.

Health and safety

Impacts would be the same as for the proposed amendment.

Wilderness

In addition to the impacts described under the proposed amendment, opportunities for solitude would be reduced in the Desatoya and Simpson Park WSAs as a result of the proximity of these WSAs to those lands where threat emitters would be permitted and the anticipated increase in noise from military overflights. Wilderness quality in these areas would be reduced.

Visual resources

Impacts to visual resources would be similar to those described under the proposed amendment. However, since this alternative would provide for threat emitters on an additional 77,000 acres scattered across much of the plan amendment area in portions of Antelope, Buffalo, Grass and Carico Lake valleys and the Shoshone, Fish

Creek, New Pass and Toiyabe Mountain ranges, the quality of visual resources would be reduced in those areas where they would be located.

Noise

This alternative would have little effect on the potential increases in noise levels. Since it would provide for threat emitters on an additional 77,000 acres scattered across much of the plan amendment area in portions of Antelope, Buffalo, Grass Pine and Carico Lake valleys and the Shoshone, Fish Creek, New Pass and Toiyabe Mountain ranges, potential new threat emitter related air combat training maneuvers would continue to affect the peace and quiet of central Nevada.

ALTERNATIVE B

Wildlife habitat

Prohibiting future threat emitter sites on 1.6 million acres within one mile of sensitive areas outside of the Dixie/Fairview Valley/Bell Flat/Middlegate area would reduce the potential for future disturbance of wildlife habitat in central Nevada. This could include preventing surface disturbance and disturbance from military ground activities associated with threat emitters, such as security patrols and manning of the sites.

A total of three million acres of public land throughout the planning area would continue to be potentially available for threat emitter sites. These areas include the Toiyabe, Shoshone and Fish Creek mountains and Grass and Carico Lake valleys. These areas contain important mule deer, sage grouse and antelope habitat. Threat emitters in these areas would result in additional wildlife habitat disturbance from surface disturbance and military ground and air activity. Since aircraft flights associated with threat emitters are not limited to direct overflights of the emitters, this alternative would result in noise and wildlife disturbance from potential future threat emitter associated overflights throughout most of the plan amendment area.

Other wildlife habitat impacts would be the same as those for the proposed amendment.

Wild horses and habitat

This alternative may effect the health of wild horses due to human intrusion in Herd Use Areas. Threat emitter sites could result in additional wild horse habitat disturbance due to military ground and air activity. During critical times of the year (late winter through foaling season) this intrusion could adversely affect the health of the herd. Other impacts would be the same as those for the proposed amendment.

Cultural resources

Prohibiting future threat emitter sites on 1.6 million acres would reduce the potential for future disturbance to cultural resources in central Nevada. No future surface disturbance from these sites in these areas would occur, reducing the potential for disturbance to cultural resources.

A total of three million acres of public land throughout the planning area would continue to be potentially available for threat emitter sites. Threat emitters in these areas would result in additional cultural resource impacts from surface disturbance.

Other cultural resource impacts would be the same as for the proposed amendment.

Social and economic conditions

Prohibiting future threat emitter sites on 1.6 million acres within one mile of sensitive areas outside of the Dixie/Fairview Valley/Bell Flat/Middlegate area would have little effect on social economic conditions in central Nevada. Threat emitters could continue to be located throughout the plan amendment area. Noise from new threat emitter related aircraft overflights would reduce the quality of life in central Nevada.

Other social and economic impacts would be the same as for the proposed amendment.

Land use

Land use plans. This alternative would have little affect on reducing future conflicts with the management of other resources as identified in the existing RMPs. Threat emitters could continue to be located on three million acres throughout the plan amendment area. Continued surface disturbance, site closures, visual intrusions, security patrols and noise from associated military air combat training operations due to potential future threat emitters would occur and continue to disrupt the management of public lands under the existing RMPs.

Other impacts to land use plans would be the same as for the proposed amendment.

Electronic warfare sites - Navy. Prohibiting threat emitter sites on 1.6 million acres within 1 mile of sensitive resource areas, private lands/communities and highways would somewhat limit site development but in general still allow for the potential to locate threat emitter sites over three million acres (60 percent) of the planning area, particularly in the valley bottoms not near individual residences or small communities. Operation of the electronic warfare systems on the sites requires that infrastructure such as roadways, powerlines and communication cables be constructed to the sites resulting in impacts that are greater than the sites themselves. Frequent vehicle trips by military personnel are required for the construction operation and maintenance of the facilities. The land affected by the communication sites would be removed from further consideration for all other public uses.

The Navy has indicated that this alternative would not affect its plans for future expansion of electronic warfare in central Nevada.

Other impacts to Navy electronic warfare sites would be the same as for the proposed amendment.

Communication sites - other . Impacts would be the same as under the proposed amendment.

Recreation. This alternative would have little impact on recreation opportunities in central Nevada. Since this alternative would provide for threat emitters on three million acres throughout the plan amendment area, military ground activity and security force patrols and noise from potential future threat emitter related aircraft overflights would continue to reduce the quality of recreation opportunities in central Nevada.

Ranching. Impacts would be the same as for alternative A.

Health and safety

Impacts would be the same as for the proposed amendment

Wilderness

Impacts to wilderness values would be similar to those described under Alternative A. There would be additional interference with opportunities for solitude as a result of threat emitters being allowed to be located within one mile of WSA boundaries. Noise from military overflights would be greater inside the WSAs than it would under the proposed action. Wilderness quality in these areas would be reduced.

Visual resources

Impacts to visual resources would be similar to those described under Alternative A. However, since this alternative would provide for threat emitters on three million acres throughout the plan amendment area, visual quality would be reduced in those areas where they would be located.

Noise

Since this alternative would provide for threat emitters on three million acres throughout the plan amendment area, potential new threat emitter related combat training overflights would continue to affect the peace and quiet of central Nevada. The net noise and sonic boom impacts of this alternative would be the same as for continuing current management.

CONTINUATION OF CURRENT MANAGEMENT ALTERNATIVE

Wildlife habitat

Pending action by Congress, 625,000 acres of high quality wildlife habitat in the Desatoya, Clan Alpine, Stillwater, Augusta, Gabbs Valley and Simpson Park mountains would be protected from future communication and electronic warfare site development. The other 4.6 million acres of public lands in the plan amendment area would continue to be subject to surface disturbance, electromagnetic radiation emissions and military ground and air operations associated with threat emitter development and operations. These impacts would not be significant since site development and operation would continue to be subject to the standard operating procedures and laws which protect wildlife habitat.

Wild horses and habitat

The Herd Use Areas as shown in the RMPs would continue to be subject to surface disturbance, electromagnetic radiation hazards and military ground and air operations associated with threat emitter development and operations, subject to standard operating procedures and mitigation developed in site authorizations.

Cultural resources

Leaving 4.6 million acres open for communication and electronic warfare site development will continue the potential for future disturbance to cultural resources. However, all facilities would continue to be subject to existing standard operating procedures and laws to protect cultural resources, therefore these impacts are not expected to be significant.

Communication site exclusion areas would not be established under this alternative, therefore the potential threat to Native American traditional cultural properties associated with mountainous areas and high places would continue.

Social and economic conditions

Continuing to permit electronic warfare sites throughout the plan amendment area would result in major future reductions in the quality of life in central Nevada. These would be primarily related to noise and the occurrence of military combat training aircraft operations associated with new threat emitter sites. The quality of life of central Nevada residents and visitors would continue to be degraded by this noise and increased presence of combat aircraft, military personnel and security forces. The tourist industry and the attractiveness of the region for residences could be affected by additional threat emitter related aircraft noise.

Noise, and surface and visual disturbance associated with future site development and operation in the upper Reese River Valley, Crescent Valley, Grass Valley and Bald Mountain areas would continue to affect the quality of life and traditional ceremonies of the Yomba and Western Shoshone Indians.

Land use

Land use plans. Continuing to permit electronic warfare facilities throughout the plan amendment area would result in future disruption in the management of other resources in central Nevada as identified in

the RMPs. These would be primarily related to noise from military combat training operations associated with new threat emitter sites. In addition, continued surface disturbance, site closures, visual intrusions and security patrols due to potential future threat emitters would disrupt the multiple use and sustained yield management of public lands under the existing RMPs. On a cumulative basis, considering the effects of the existing level of threat emitter development, these impacts would be major.

Electronic warfare sites - Navy. The continuation of current management alternative would maintain the previous procedure for processing electronic warfare facility applications. That approach was to have the Navy identify what they wanted to construct over a five year period then analyze that use through a NEPA document without the amount of public involvement afforded by this land use planning process and without a land use plan specifically addressing electronic warfare training facilities as an issue. Proper management of electronic warfare facility development was difficult. The result of this approach was a piecemeal expansion of military electronic warfare sites on public land as well as well as hundreds of miles of supporting infrastructure. Except for wilderness study areas, the entire planning area would be subject to the same type of development and cumulative impacts with little long term planning or control under the continuation of current management alternative.

In the short term, the Navy has proposed to establish new threat emitter sites in Edwards Creek Valley, Gabbs Valley, Smith Creek Valley and Smokey Valley. New TIS sites are proposed for the Fish Creek Mountains, New Pass Mountains, Desatoya Mountains, Shoshone Mountains and near the Hickison Petroglyph site (U.S. Navy, 1995a). Additional site are proposed for nearby National Forest lands.

Communication sites- other. Communication site applications could be filed on public lands throughout the planning area with little basis for denial except in wilderness study areas. Without the identification of specific preferred locations for communication facilities proliferation of facilities on public lands could result. This could degrade undeveloped public land. Without a plan to identify specific sites for commercial and governmental facilities, an undesirable, piece meal approach to development of the sites would occur.

Recreation. Impacts to recreation opportunities would be similar to those described under Alternatives A and B. Some additional loss of opportunities could occur on those lands where communication sites would be permitted and constructed.

Ranching. In addition to the impacts listed in Alternative A, the continuation of current management alternative could allow a wider dispersion of these sites in the future, potentially resulting in the dominant use of this area by the Navy and interfering with ranching operations on the public lands.

Health and Safety

Public health and safety would continue to be endangered by threat emitters and their associated air combat training exercises in central Nevada. Currently, five existing threat emitter sites emit potentially harmful levels of electromagnetic radiation in areas accessible to the public.

The Navy has indicated that chaff disposal over public lands has been discontinued. However potential health hazards remain from the existing chaff that has already been dropped. In addition, future chaff drops over Navy lands could drift onto other public or private lands.

Wilderness

Impacts to opportunities for solitude and wilderness values would be similar to those described under Alternatives A and B. Facilities could be constructed near WSA boundaries and the possibility of viewing such sites from within a WSA would further diminish solitude opportunities.

Visual resources

Impacts to visual resource values would be similar to those described under Alternatives A and B. Some additional disturbance to visual resources would occur on those lands where facilities would be permitted and constructed.

Noise

Since this alternative would continue to provide for threat emitter sites throughout most of the plan amendment area, air combat training noise and sonic booms associated with future threat emitters would further degrade the peace and quiet of central Nevada.

CONSULTATION AND COORDINATION

The plan amendment process was initiated as a result of consultation with residents of central Nevada that were concerned about the expansion of military facilities and a result of coordination with the State of Nevada, which requested a comprehensive planning effort to address this issue. The formal process was initiated with the publication of a Federal Register Notice of Intent to Amend the Lahontan, Walker and Shoshone-Eureka RMPs (Vol. 60, No. 24, 2/6/95). Press releases were published in newspapers throughout northern and central Nevada. With this notification, a scoping letter was sent to about 250 individuals and organizations. The letter requested help in identifying issues for the impact analysis, areas where communication sites would be appropriate, where they would not be appropriate and any guidelines for their location and construction.

Three public open houses were held to discuss the plan amendment. Seven people attended the Carson City meeting, nine attended in Fallon and 37 attended in Austin.

A total of 56 comments were received during the 45-day comment period. The letters and public meeting transcripts are on file at the Carson City District Office and are available for public review. These comments yielded the issues analyzed in this document, with the primary concern expressed about military air operations related to electronic warfare site location.

In addition to public consultation and coordination, on-going consultation and coordination with the Navy has occurred throughout this process, including a formal plan alternative briefing in September, 1995. This consultation process resulted in the Navy identifying Alternative B as its preferred alternative.

PREPARERS/REVIEWERS

Table 2
Qualifications of Preparers/Reviewers

Name	Responsibility	Office	Education	Experience
David Loomis	Project Manager, Social Economics, Noise, Health & Safety	Carson City District	M.S. Land Use Planning B.A. Economics	18 years
Christopher Stubbs	Associate Project Manager, Noise	Battle Mtn. District	M.S. Nat. Resource Planning B.A. Government	7 years
Mike Phillips	Management Review	Carson City District	B.S. Forestry/Range	26 years
Wayne King	Management Review	Battle Mtn. District	B.S. Natural Resources Mgmt.	22 years
Brian Amme	Planning/NEPA Review	Nevada State Office	B.A. Anthropology	12 years
Rick Brigham	Wildlife	Carson City District	B.S. Wildlife Mgmt.	26 years
Walt Brown	Visual Resources	Battle Mtn. District	B.S. Geology	8 years
Duane Crimmins	Wildlife	Battle Mtn. District	B.S. Wildlife Science	19 years
Kathy Sladish	Lands and Rights-of-way	Battle Mtn. District	M.A. Mathematics B.S. Mathematics	7 years
Terry Knight	Recreation, Wilderness, Visual Resources	Carson City District	M.A. Recreation B.S. Intl. Affairs	17 years
Gary Foulkes	Cultural Resources	Battle Mtn. District	M.A. Anthropology M.A. Philosophy B.A. Philosophy	14 years
Kathy Graham	Wildlife	Battle Mtn.	B.S. Wildlife Mgmt.	8 years
Prill Mecham	Cultural Resources	Carson City District	B.A. Anthropology	20 years

Tracey Pharo	Recreation, Wilderness	Battle Mtn. District	B.A. Recreation	7 years
Cynthia Pinto	Native American Consultation	Nevada State Office	M.A. Anthropology B.A. Anthropology	7 years
Chuck Pope	Communication and Electronic Warfare Sites	Carson City District	B.S. Range	20 years
Jim Ramakka	Wildlife	Carson City District	M.S. Wildlife B.S. Wildlife	25 years
Cub Wolfe	Ranching	Carson City District	B.S. Range/Wildlife	21 years

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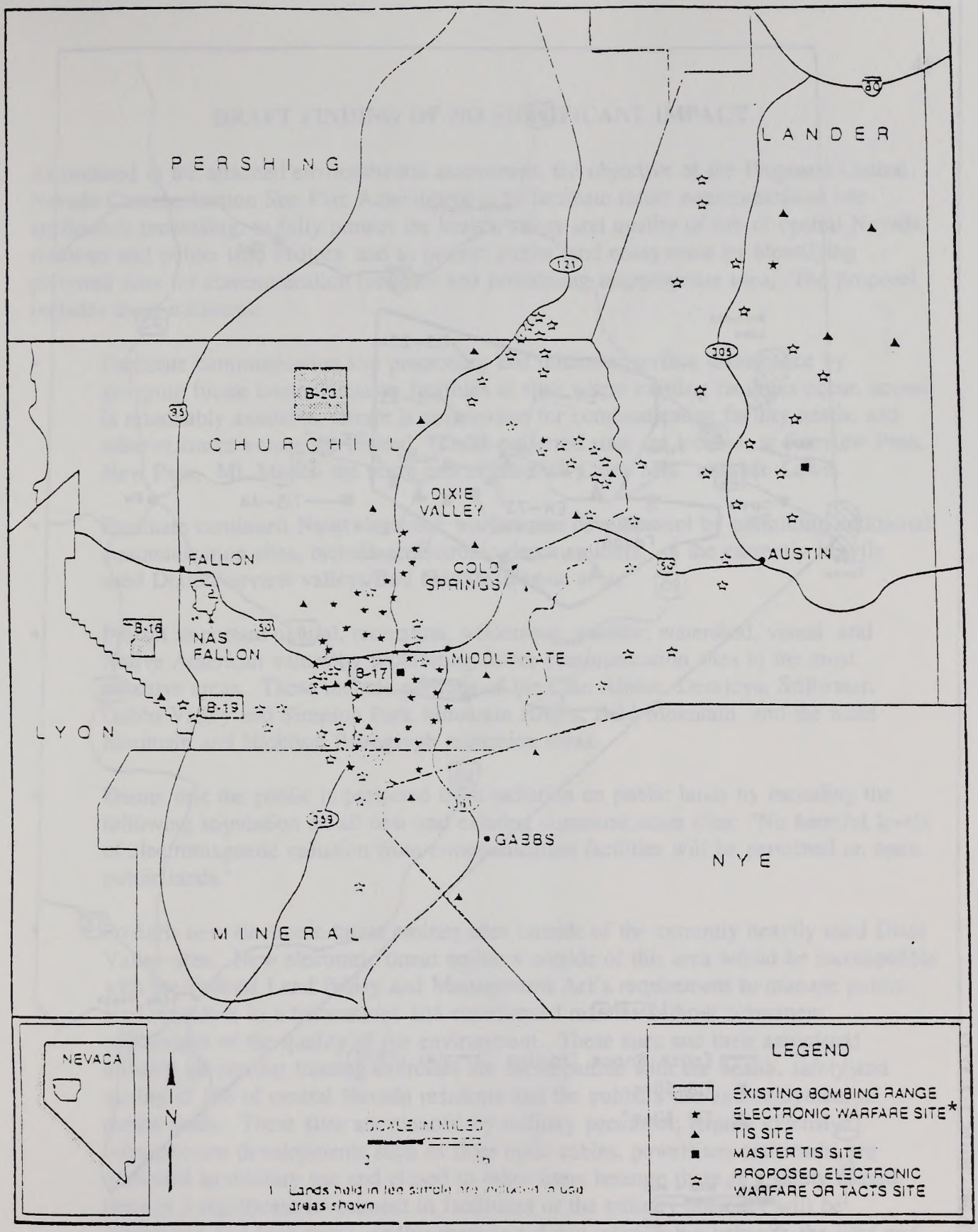
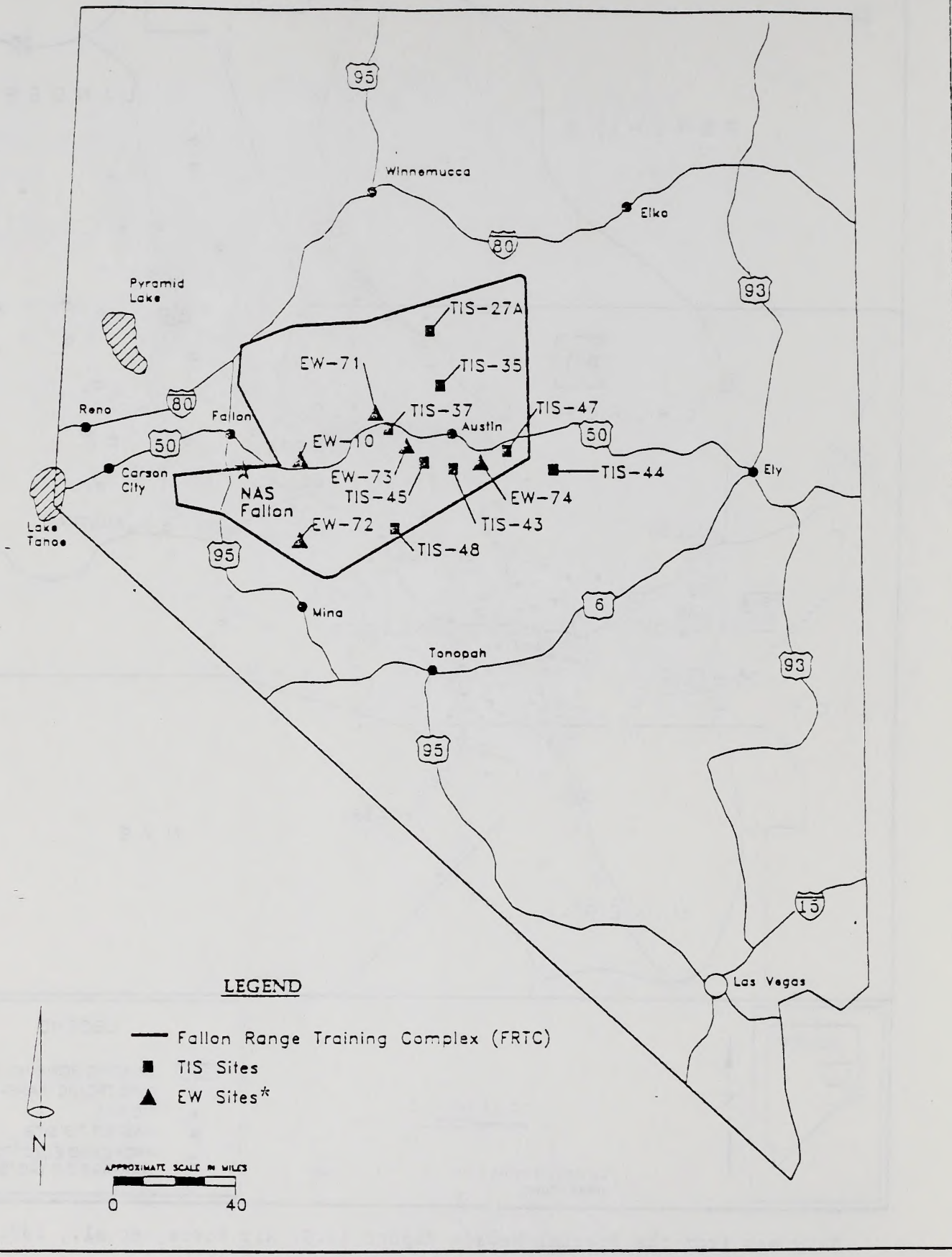
APPENDIX



Navy map from the Special Nevada Report (U.S. Air Force, et al., 1991)

* Threat emitter

This map was intended to provide a general indication of potential long term Navy electronic warfare facility expansion.



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Navy map from the draft electronic warfare communication site environmental assessment (U.S. Navy, 1995a)

*Threat emitters

This map depicts the Navy's current short term proposal for electronic warfare facility expansion.

DRAFT FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

As outlined in the attached environmental assessment, the objective of the Proposed Central Nevada Communication Site Plan Amendment is to facilitate future communication site application processing, to fully protect the health, safety and quality of life of central Nevada residents and public land visitors, and to protect public land ecosystems by identifying preferred sites for communication facilities and prohibiting inappropriate uses. The proposal includes these measures:

- Facilitate communication site processing and minimize surface disturbance by grouping future communication facilities at sites where existing facilities occur, access is reasonably available, terrain is appropriate for communication facility needs, and other resource values are limited. These preferred sites are located at Fairview Peak, New Pass, Mt. Moses, the north end of the Fish Creek Mts. and Mt. Lewis.

- Facilitate continued Navy electronic warfare site development by permitting additional communication sites, including electronic threat emitters, in the currently heavily used Dixie/Fairview valleys/Bell Flat/Middlegate area.

- Protect important natural, recreation, wilderness, wildlife, watershed, visual and Native American values by prohibiting future communication sites in the most sensitive areas. These include portions of the Clan Alpine, Desatoya, Stillwater, Gabbs Valley and Simpson Park Mountain ranges, Bald Mountain and the Sand Mountain and Hickison Petroglyph recreation areas.

- Ensure that the public is protected from radiation on public lands by including the following stipulation on all new and existing communication sites: "No harmful levels of electromagnetic radiation from communication facilities will be permitted on open public lands."

- Prohibit new electronic threat emitter sites outside of the currently heavily used Dixie Valley area. New electronic threat emitters outside of this area would be incompatible with the Federal Land Policy and Management Act's requirement to manage public land resources in a harmonious and coordinated manner without permanent impairment of the quality of the environment. These sites and their associated military air combat training exercises are incompatible with the health, safety and quality of life of central Nevada residents and the public's use and enjoyment of public lands. These sites are manned by military personnel; require extensive infrastructure developments such as fiber optic cables, powerlines and roads; are dedicated to military use and closed to other users because there is a safety hazard, there is a significant investment in facilitates or the military presence will be continuous and long term; and/or there is a direct relationship between the sites and military combat aircraft overflights, such as terrain masking maneuvers.

Implementation of these measures would result in a decreased potential for future adverse environmental impact. Specifically, identification of preferred areas would result in minimizing the proliferation of sites throughout the area. Prohibiting communication sites in the most sensitive areas would prevent future adverse surface disturbance and associated air combat training impacts. Prohibiting harmful levels of radiation from communication sites would eliminate public health risks associated with the sites. Prohibiting future electronic threat emitter sites outside the Dixie Valley area would reduce the potential for future adverse air combat training related impacts. Consequently, the proposed amendment would have no significant impact.

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